

SALVADORA GRAHAMIAE VIRGULTEA, A NEW SUBSPECIES OF THE PATCH-NOSED SNAKE

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INTRODUCTION

The Patch-nosed Snakes of the genus *Salvadora* first attracted my serious attention in 1928 when I collected a snake belonging to this genus on the Mojave Desert at Dove Springs, Kern County, California. This specimen was so strikingly different in coloration from individuals of the genus that I had previously collected in the Upper Sonoran Zone of the San Gabriel Mountains in Los Angeles County that the difference appeared worthy of note. Since 1928 several specimens, of both the desert and Upper Sonoran forms, were examined in the field, dead on the road or collected alive, and distinct differences between the two forms were observed to be consistent.

Klauber ('31)¹ under the heading, *Color Variation with Habitat*, likewise noted these differences, stating:

"*S. g. hexalepis*: In this form there is a definite change from coast to desert, specimens from the latter area being considerably lighter. Not only are the colors lighter in the eastern individuals, both in ground color and brown longitudinal stripes, but the width of the light dorsal line is increased and the secondary lines on the sides are more pronounced, thus heightening the contrast by increasing the light and decreasing the dark areas. An occasional lighter specimen is found amongst the coastal individuals, but the average difference is extensive."

When an investigation of the desert and coastal forms, both of which have heretofore been regarded as a single form, *hexalepis*, was undertaken, it was found that there existed considerable discrepancy in the range of *Salvadora grahamiae hexalepis* (Cope 1866) as given by recent authors.² Thus it became apparent that a more complete understanding of the relationships existed between the eastern form, *S. g. grahamiae*, and the desert form, *S. g. hexalepis*, would have to be established before a fair comparison of the desert and coastal forms could be made. In order better to gain this understanding a study of the entire genus has been entered upon by the writer, and the results,

¹ Klauber, 1931, p. 48.

² See Stejneger and Barbour, 1933, p. 97; Klauber, 1931, p. 9; Blanchard, 1925, p. 32.